



## **Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of**

Date: 10/10/03

To: Public Safety & Regulatory Services Committee, The Honorable  
Dan Niziolek, Chairperson

Referral to: City Council

**Subject: Safety-Sweep Inspections of all rental properties located in  
Como & Marcy-Holmes neighborhoods**

**Recommendation:** Approve deployment of some housing inspector resource hours to accomplish safety inspections for 1-3 unit rental buildings in Como & Marcy-Holmes.

Prepared or Submitted by: JoAnn Velde, Deputy Director Housing Inspection Services 673-5850

Approved by:

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Merwyn Larson, Director of Inspections

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John Bergquist, Assistant City Coordinator, Operations and Regulatory Services

Presenters in Committee: Merwyn Larson, Director  
JoAnn Velde, Deputy Director

**Financial Impact:**

X  Action is within current department budget.

**Community Impact:**

City Goals: Through education and enforcement of the Housing Maintenance Code, Housing Inspection Services works with residents and businesses in the City to preserve existing housing and improve community livability.

**Background/Supporting Information Attached**

## **SAFETY INSPECTION SWEEP FOR RENTAL BUILDINGS LOCATED IN COMO & MARCY-HOLMES NEIGHBORHOODS**

The Director of Inspections is recommending approval to deploy some housing inspector resource hours to accomplish safety inspections for 1-3 unit rental buildings in Como & Marcy-Holmes. Fire Department personnel will be inspecting all high occupancy buildings with 4 or greater rental units. This inspection initiative will be accomplished with the least amount of impact on current service levels throughout Housing Districts. No Council Member will be losing their assigned inspector availability during this sweep. (Details in attached report)

Housing is now prepared to launch a safety sweep and Fire has started their sweep responsibilities. The planning results of this coordinated effort with Fire are in alignment with the larger initiative for 2004. The details of this initiative follow.

### **Roles & Responsibilities:**

#### **Housing Inspection Services 1-3 rental unit buildings**

- The start time for this sweep is October 2003 with completion by the end of the year on all initial inspections. Anticipated work hours related to this sweep are approximately 1,475. The time value to complete initial and any follow-up inspections is 2.075 hours per case x 711 buildings.
- Twenty eight inspectors will be deployed into Marcy Holmes & Como with a minimum expectation to complete 2 initial safety inspections each week. Each inspector will be given 25 buildings to complete over a 3-month period.

#### **Enforcement process to conserve resources and enable us to expedite housing cases for this additional work load assignment.**

- Educational letter will be sent from Merwyn Larson, Director of Inspections to inform owners on the safety codes that will be covered in the sweep. (See attached letter)
- If owners are reluctant to comply voluntarily, Inspections will go immediately to a legal enforcement method.
- No warning letters will be sent.

#### **Potential impacts on current service levels throughout the City:**

- The number of new systematic rental licensing inspections will be limited unless a complaint has been received on a problem building. **Limited Impact**
- Inspectors will respond to all complaints in their assigned districts. **No Impact**
- Inspectors will maintain all re-inspections required on any open housing cases in their assigned districts. **No Impact**
- There may be a need to provide over-time for this special service request not to exceed \$15,000. This will assure current service levels throughout the City.
- IT issues will need to be resolved so that the paperwork sent to Housing from the Fire Department can be entered into KIVA and inspection information can move between the two departments effectively.

- Housing clerical support staff will complete all inspection-related data entries for the Fire Department for this safety sweep. There may be a need to extend staff hours by giving them over-time pay or comp-time to accomplish these additional entries while maintaining current service activities.
- Housing's management team is assisting the Fire Department by developing a Housing/Fire Safety Code Checklist, training a limited number of Fire Personnel on our paperwork process, & current legal methods for obtaining compliance for Housing Code Violations. Fire personnel will train all the additional Fire Personnel deployed to accomplish these inspections.

### **Fire Department High Occupancy Inspection of 4 or greater rental unit buildings**

- The Fire Department will conduct the safety sweep in all 4-plex and larger buildings in the Marcy-Holmes and Como neighborhoods. Approximately 218 buildings are in this category. This week, a letter will be sent from the Fire Marshal to each building owner notifying him or her of the sweep.
- Five personnel from the Fire Department will do all of these sweep visits. They are Deputy Chief David Dewall (the new Fire Marshal effective January 2004), Battalion Chiefs David Walburg, Kevin Rousseau, John Szczech and Todd White. This will mean each one of them will be assigned 40-50 buildings to complete by the end of the year 2003. They will be working a 24-hour shift beginning in mid October. This will allow them to set up visits in the evenings and on weekends when the residents of these buildings are most likely to be home.
- Housing & Fire have developed a checklist of items that the fire personnel & Housing Inspectors will be looking for during this sweep. No buildings will receive a full housing inspection during this sweep and no new licenses will be issued. Each department will work on a separate set of buildings and will not be conducting inspections together.
- The original fire personnel will do one reinspection at each building in November and December. If the orders are not complied with after one reinspection, the file will be forwarded to the Fire Prevention office and a civilian fire inspector will follow up with the owner. Consent for entry into individual apartments will be obtained in person at each individual building. The inspector will note the name and telephone number of the resident on the inspection forms.



Safety Sweep Letter  
draft.doc